

Run and Gun and Stun

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Summary: Clint teaches Bucky how to play First Person Shooters through Halo: Combat Evolved. Unfortunate parallels are explored, and hilarity eventually ensues. Prompt: Avengers play video games.

Run and Gun and Stun

It was a well known fact in Avengers Tower that Clint Barton was _the _resident gamer. He was considered the best FPS player in the house and few could challenge him. In fact, Clint knew only of one better than he, and she'd never admit to it for fear that Tony would make her prove her skills at first person shooters, much to her annoyance. As it was, Clint and Natasha remained perfectly content with the way things were. Clint enjoyed many game series including Halo, Call of Duty, Fallout, and Mario Kart. But few in the Tower spoke of Mario Kart any more. Not after the time that Sam Wilson and Clint had taught Steve how to play. That hadn't ended well at all on so many levels.

So as it was, Clint often found himself alone by the hour of midnight, staring at the large flatscreen TV in the main living room of Avengers Tower, occasionally accompanied by Natasha who would sit on the adjacent comfy chair and sip her red wine while he sat on the couch, hunched forward, controller in hand, eyes fixated on the game before him. He was loathe to admit it, but it got lonely and boring. Sometimes.

After a while, though, a new face showed up to these late night gaming sessions. He wasn't new to the Tower; Steve had brought him in months ago. But he had avoided these games like they were the plague. So the spies were confused when he came in quietly and sat down, vodka in hand, opposite Natasha. Both the spies were good friends with him. After Steve had brought him to the Tower, he and Clint had bonded over their shared brainwashing experiences, and of course he'd

already had a _long _history with Nat.

But Bucky had never wanted anything to do with Clint's gaming, first person shooter or otherwise. Everyone supposed it was due to his abuse at the hands of HYDRA, but no one really thought to ask him as it was a touchy subject for all parties involved. That was why both Clint and Natasha were utterly confused at his foray into their world of gaming. Especially given the game of choice that night was Halo: Combat Evolved.

"What're you up to?" Clint asked Bucky as he turned back to the couch once the Xbox One was turned on.

Bucky shrugged. "I was in the mood for some entertainment. Mind?"

Natasha answered for him after a sip of her glass. "Not at all. I could use the company. Clint gets really into his games."

He half-smiled and sat down across from her. "Wine? You were always a vodka girl when I knew you, Nat. What changed?"

She smirked at him and shrugged. "Guess I had my fill of Russia."

Bucky snorted in agreement as he looked at his own vodka. He frowned slightly and placed it on the side table beside his seat. He'd lost his appetite all of a sudden.

"What's the game of choice tonight, Clint?" Bucky turned to the archer as the other man sat back against the couch and wiggled to get comfortable.

"Halo," he replied. "The first one, Master Chief Collection anniversary edition."

Natasha told Jarvis to lower the lights. They faded down as the TV screen began shining all the brighter. Halo's main screen popped up. Clint used the thumbstick to scroll down to 'Campaign'. Halo was one of his favorites. The whole series was something special in his eyes. As soon as the One had been released, he got the Master Chief Edition of Halo.

"Cool." Bucky took a sip of his drink absentmindedly. When he swallowed, he looked at his drink in utter confusion and disgust. He wasn't sure why he'd poured himself the Russian liquor, other than out of habit. And that was a habit he certainly would prefer to break.

"So what's the premise?" Bucky asked Clint as the game's loading screen came on. "Who do you play as?"

"I'm a soldier who's been genetically engineered against my will" Clint trailed off as he realized what he was saying.

Bucky cocked an eyebrow. "Wonderful. What's your name?"

"John-117, also known as Master Chief." Clint turned back to the game as the first mission began.

From what Bucky could gather, the game took place aboard some kind of spaceship. The main character, John-117 he supposed, was being held in cryostasis. _Wonderful. _The irony that this was the first game he was exposed to fully was not lost on him.

At first, Bucky had sensed Clint's hesitation as the archer also realized theâ€| unfortunateâ€| parallels at play. But now Clint was fully immersed in the game. Bucky watched as his thumbs and trigger fingers flew, reacting quickly to every threat that appeared. The enemies seemed to be aliens of some sort.

_Of course they are. It's in space. _

Bucky reached for his glass and sighed as he looked at the clear liquid. He was thirsty though, so he took a sip. He was fully aware that Natasha was watching him in scrutiny from across the coffee table, but he didn't show it. He was pretty sure she knew that he knew. After all, they had known each other quite well even before his rescue from Hydra. He'd _trained _her. Of _course _she could read him and he, her.

Clint was not aware of either former Russian operative. He was engrossed in the ongoing battle unfolding before him.

"Shit," he bleated out as a pulse of energy from an enemy rifle struck him, taking out his outer shields and he began muttering to himself. "Find cover, find cover, find cover!"

"There- a broken support beam," Bucky pointed to a structure Clint could hide behind.

With a nod, the archer directed Master Chief behind the cover. He fired upon the oncoming aliens and tossed a grenade for good measure. Bucky watched intently, eyes darting around, taking in every last detail. For some reason he was beginning to take comfort in this. It was familiar.

Clint was guiding Master Chief through corridor after corridor. Enemies behind every wall, it seemed, waited to jump out and attack. There were tall aliens that Bucky found out were called "Elites." The smallest aliens, who would yell funny sayings when chased, were called "Grunts." "Jackals," the middle of the two, seemed to be also in between them in difficulty.

"On you left," Bucky interjected, "Elite. With a grenade!"

Clint nodded and dodged the incoming explosive while sending back a rain of bullets, and his own grenade, just to be sure. With the Elite dealt with, Clint walked through a door and into a cut scene. He explained to Bucky that the naked, cyber-like blue woman was Cortana, an AI that worked with the Chief and the humans.

"For now," Natasha added ominously.

Clint shrugged in agreement before continuing. "She's been in almost every Halo game. Including Halo: Reach, my favorite game."

With the end of the cutscene, Clint guided Master Chief, now with Cortana in his suit, out of the bridge and down a corridor. Along the way they battled Elites and Grunts and Jackals. Clint was good, Bucky

would give him that. But Bucky thought he could do better.

Natasha noticed that Bucky was itching to play. She smiled to herself as she sipped her wine and watched the boys. They were two of her best friends, one from her old life and one from her new. More alike than they probably realized, she thought of both Bucky and Clint as brothers. There had been times when each had been more than that, but she'd moved on. Her ruminations ended as she was brought back to the present by a shout.

"LEFT Clint. LEFT!"

Bucky gestured to an Elite that was creeping up on him. Clint nodded and shot it down before leading Master Chief into some pitch black side corridors. The objective now was simple- get to the escape pods and abandon the dying ship. Boarding parties of Covenant forces, as Bucky had learned the were called, began docking in the place of launched escape pods. Thanks to an explosion, Master Chief was now forced to travel these back passage ways.

Clint flipped on the flashlight as he walked silently through the corridor. He turned corners and shot down various enemies. Easy enough. Legendary difficulty with most of the skulls on did make things much harder, but he could handle it. Until he turned another corner and walked straight into a huge Elite.

"CLINT! KILL IT!"

"I'm DOING MY _BEST_!"

Natasha watched as Clint showered the area with bullets. The Elite fired on him as well and by the time the enemy was dead, Clint had lost shields and half his health. Bucky and Clint began to breathe easy, laughing to each other, but Natasha cocked an eyebrow as she saw something they did not. A suicide grunt was creeping up on them with two plasma grenades ready to detonate.

"Guys." she said.

They turned to look just in time as the Grunt approached. Clint panicked.

"Ah FUCK!" Clint shrieked, killing the grunt but not before the plasma grenades went off right on top of him.

Bucky shouted at him. "How could you let that happen?!"

"You certainly weren't any help, _super soldier_!" Clint narrowed his eyes.

"Let me give it a go," Bucky insisted.

Clint hesitated but tossed him the controller. Natasha, amused, got up and went over to the nearby minibar to grab another glass of wine. This was going to be good. She watched her old comrade feel the controller in his hands. She could tell it felt good. For some reason it felt natural. He liked the way his hands fit around the buttons and triggers.

Clint began relaying the controls. "Left thumbstick controls

movement, right controls camera. Right trigger is-"

"I know." Bucky cut him off almost immediately.

Natasha almost laughed at the indignant look on Clint's face. But Bucky didn't care. He had a level to beat, he had enemies to kill. Flipping on the flashlight, he began the slow creep through the dark back passageways. He took out the enemies neatly and efficiently. Clint watched in amazement as he engaged each enemy, taking no more than three or four hits per engagement.

For his part, Bucky wished only one thing. He wanted a silencer. Honestly, he decided he'd settle for anything besides the rapid fire, automatic assault rifle he had at the moment. It was true that he had a pistol as well, but his was low on ammo.

_Thanks, Clint, _he supposed sarcastically to himself.

One by one, Bucky took out the opposition. Calmly and systematically, the Covenant was destroyed on board the Pillar of Autumn. Clint watched in awe, as well as jealousy, while Bucky advanced through the level without losing shields even once. Bucky took Master Chief through the dark corridors and finally they arrived at the lifeboats. As it went to cutscene, Bucky smiled.

"Not bad." Clint shrugged. "But it was only level one."

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